

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Mental Health Advisory Committee
2:00 – 4:00 PM**

Date: Tuesday, August 21, 2007

Location: Omaha State Office Building, 1313 Farnam on the Mall
Conference Room H

Interpreters: Jamy Elker & Bethany Koupsky

Members Present

Melinda Brown
Vickie Pratt

Technical Advisors Present

Vickie Campbell
Diane Meyer
Mandy Leamon
Karen Potter Maxwell

Staff Present

Peggy Williams
Tanya Wendel
Janet Killam

Gather, Welcome & Introductions

Ms. Pratt called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of May 15, 2007 Minutes – The May 15, 2007 minutes were discussed and changes were made. Ms. Pratt asked that on the last page under her report to change the last sentence to read “mental health bill LB 247 is before the Legislature now and that if passed the therapist could apply for a new license as a licensed independent mental health practitioner which would allow that therapist to diagnose major mental illness”.

Ms. Wendel asked that changes be made under old business/agency updates to Dr. Lusk and Dr. Cohn’s names. (The names appearing in the minutes were Dr. Lust and Dr. Kohn).

Ms. Meyer asked to change that summer school for the Metro Regional Program was for 2 weeks instead of 3 under Melinda’s report.

A motion was made to accept the minutes as corrected, all were in favor.

Alegent Health Delivery of Services Plan - Ms. Williams passed out the Recommended Service Delivery Plan for The Lasting Hope Recovery Center in Treating Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumers and Their Families and reported that the selected MHAC sub committee developed the plan and Ms. Williams then submitted to Mr. Steve Spelic with Alegent in June. She explained that she will be meeting with Lora Cobbs and Tom Hickey with Immanuel Hospital on August 24th to discuss the Service Delivery Plan and offer me feedback on the plan. Ms. Williams gave a summary of the plan and feels that it is very thorough and complete. She reported that Steve Spelic shared that Mr. Hickey and Ms. Cobbs wanted to discuss the “Peer Support” recommendation and the training that was outlined in the plan. Ms. Williams will advocate that deaf and hard of hearing people have a peer support component set up and will also strongly advocate for continuous

training on deafness/hearing loss as outlined in the plan. Following the meeting with Immanuel, Ms. Williams will email the MHAC and provide information on what discussed during the meeting. Ms. Wendel thanked the committee for their work with this plan and asked for Ms. Williams' to clarify II B.4 regarding ongoing education and workshops for deaf and hard of hearing. Ms. Williams explained this would involve ongoing training with the deaf and hard of hearing on domestic violence, substance abuse and behavioral health issues. Ms. Wendel asked if the Center would only serve adults and Ms. Williams explained that it would only serve adults for now. Ms. Wendel also asked if Boys Town counselors were going to be involved in offering services and Ms. Williams explained that she contacted all of the counselors at Boys Town and their focus is working with children and were not be interested in contracting with the Center at this time. Ms. Brown committed that she feels by contracting with the Center it might be a little "sticky" for her because of her involvement in the deaf community. For now she stated her focus was working with children.

Members Terms (New Chairperson) – Ms. Williams passed out a listing of members terms and explained that Melinda's term expired in May 2007. Ms. Williams emailed Ms. Brown and asked her if she would be willing to continue until her position could be filled. Ms. Brown agreed to continue as long as she was needed or until her position was filled. Ms. Wendel indicated that we would need to make changes to the by-laws indicating that when a person's term expires they could continue until the position is filled. Ms. Williams reported that Richard McCowin's term expires in November 2007 and he can be reappointed for another 3 years if requested. Ms. Williams reviewed other terms with the members. Ms. Pratt stated she is fine with continuing to serve but she does not want to continue as chairperson. Ms. Leamon stated that she would be willing to apply to become a voting member of the committee; as of now Ms. Leamon is an ex-officio. Ms. Wendel stated that according to the by-laws if a member misses 3 consecutive meetings to report this to the NCDHH full commission members and a decision will need to be made about replacing this position. Discussion was held regarding this issue.

Due to other responsibilities Ms. Pratt has accepted she will not be able to continue serving as chairperson and asked if anyone else had an interest in taking over this responsibility. Ms. Brown expressed interest in serving as chairperson and the committee agreed that Ms. Brown would be the new chairperson for the MHAC effective at the next meeting, November 2007.

Karen Potter Maxwell arrived to the meeting and Ms. Brown introduced her as a newly appointed Ex-Officio of the committee representing the field of interpreting. Introductions were made. Ms. Williams explained that at a previous meeting a motion was made to have an interpreter serve as ex-officio and therefore, Ms. Potter Maxwell will represent Omaha interpreters and Lori Beard will represent Lincoln interpreters on the advisory committee.

By-Laws – Ms. Williams reported that LB 25 which created the Commission's Mental Health Specialist mandated that a special advisory committee be appointed by the

Commission to advise the Mental Health Specialist on programs and services. She stated three counselors familiar with mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse disorders and two human service professionals would be appointed to carry out that duty and gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the mental health advisory committee. Ms. Wendel stated that in statute the responsibility is to ensure access of mental health treatment programs and services throughout the state. She indicated that a previous advisory committee determined what the role was in working with the Commission's Mental Health Specialist. Discussion was held regarding member's terms and attendance at meetings and Ms. Brown's current position. Ms. Brown's term has expired; however, she is still willing to continue serving on the committee until a replacement can be made.

Mental Health Specialist Update

1. "A New Look at the Old" Video Tape – Ms. Williams showed parts of the video tape on sensory impairment in older adults that was produced through a grant from Creighton University for nurses on a national level to receive continuing education. Ms. Williams presented on "Communication Tips and Technology". Discussion was held regarding using this video for training at Hospital's. Ms. Williams will email the Trinity Healthforce Learning Programs for their permission.

2. Domestic Violence Committee – Ms. Williams reported that she has set up a domestic violence committee to assist in planning workshops and address issues that impact the deaf and hard of hearing communities. The committee consists of Tami Nelson, Patti Reitz and Melinda Brown.

3. Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Workshop – Ms. Williams reported that the Domestic Violence committee is working on the first workshop of a Phase III training series of domestic violence workshop for deaf and hard of hearing people. Ms. Williams passed out fliers announcing the September 22nd workshop that will be held in Omaha at OAD Hall from 12:00 – 2:00 PM. The second workshop will be held on November 17th at the Lied Center in Omaha. Further information about the workshop will be presented to the committee once dates and times have been finalized.

4. Committee Updates- Ms. Williams distributed a list of the 2007 committee's she is currently serving on.

5. First Responders Guidelines for Special Pops- Ms. Williams passed out the approved "First Responder Guidelines for Special Populations" designed by University of Nebraska Medical Center. Ms. Williams reported she wrote the section for "People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing" and "Deaf-Blind".

6. Behavior Health Coalition- Ms. Williams reported that she had scheduled several times to attend the Behavior Health Coalition meeting as requested by Pat Connell from Boys Town and each time the meeting was cancelled. Discussion was held about providing youth treatment services to adolescents at Boys Town and concerns about why they are not providing this service. It was discussed that Boys Town did not have the funding to pay for the cost of interpreters as well as the small number of deaf and hard of hearing

youth that would need the services. Ms. Wendel stated that Boys Town had requested that NCDHH establish legislation to pay for the costs of interpreters. It was suggested that a coalition would need to be established to support the legislation if this direction is to be taken. ADA issues were discussed regarding accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing adolescents at Boys Town, however, are the numbers there? Discussion was held in regards to the involvement of Medicaid as a responsible party, loopholes in the system, covering the costs of interpreters, numbers of students in need of youth treatment services and support services. Ms. Williams and Ms. Wendel will write a letter to Dr. Brookhauser and Pat Connell requesting a meeting to discuss our concerns about access to accessible treatment for deaf and hard of hearing adolescents.

New Business

1. Minimal Standards for LMHP (Signing) – The question regarding how we are assured that a therapist providing mental health services to a deaf person is effective without the use of a professional sign language interpreter was discussed. Options such as dual credentialing or licensure was mentioned but this would not mean they could effectively provide therapy to a deaf or hard of hearing person that used sign language as their primary language. It was suggested to look at the masters programs to determine proficiency in providing counseling services to deaf and hard of hearing people. A certification through the Commission was a suggestion to show minimum language levels. Ms. Wendel stated that we do have the capability to offer a signed competency interview and stated this has been developed for the language mentors with questions being designed to measure a person's skills with an evaluation team that looks at this. The Commission would need to design related questions for the therapists. It was decided to discuss this further at the next meeting.

2. License Independent Mental Health Practitioner Law – Ms. Pratt announced LB 247 was passed by the Legislature on 5/30/07 which allows for another level of licensure for mental health practitioners and passed out information applying to this legislation. She stated the legislation allows for the practitioners to be independent which would allow the therapist the possibility of diagnosing major mental illness and provide treatment. At this time therapists are able to treat but not allowed to diagnose. Ms. Pratt explained how this legislation impacted LMHP's. Ms. Pratt also passed out an application for the independent mental health practitioner and reviewed the criterion that has been established. She stated that the Mental Health Board would be meeting in a couple of weeks to work on the rules and regulations.

Ms. Williams announced that she and Ms. Pratt wrote an article on sign language interpreter's licensure for the Mental Health Board newsletter. The newsletter should be published this fall.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 20, 2007 in Lincoln. The meeting will be held at 4600 Valley Road, 4th floor in classroom 4-B.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.